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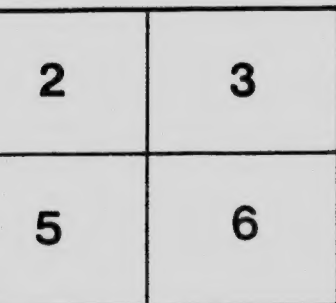
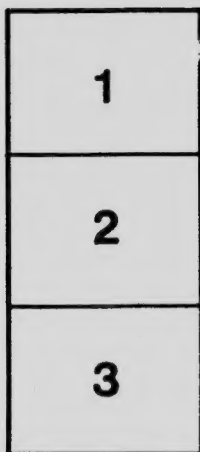
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PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
(HORTICULTURAL BRANCH).

Cucumber and Cantaloupe Growing in B.C. Dry Belt.

As these two crops require almost identical handling in their production, the descriptions as to how it is done might be incorporated in one. The seed should be planted about April 20th in the flats, as described for planting tomato-seed, except that in this case it is better to use pure sand, as better plants can be obtained by using the sand.

As soon as the plants are well up they should be transplanted into other trays, using ordinary plant-soil at this time, spacing the plants about 2 inches apart either way. They are kept here until the tomato-plants are planted in the field, which will make available plenty of empty trays, also greenhouse and cool-frame space in which to develop the cucumber and cantaloupe plants.

For this planting it is better to grow eight to ten plants to a tray. The land on which these are to be grown should be prepared some time in advance of setting. It should be fairly well enriched, as these crops require much more fertility than is the case with tomatoes.

It is important to get the plants hardened off before they are removed to the field, by frequent and thorough ventilation. Even although the weather may appear mild and warm at this time, the sudden change from a confined atmosphere to the open field will almost invariably cause quite a serious check to the plants unless well hardened off.

Usually they are removed to the field the first week in June; much, however, depends upon weather conditions. It is better to wait a few days than to hurry them to the field before the weather is sufficiently warm. They should be planted in rows about 5 feet apart, using only

one plant in a hill, as it has been found that better results have been obtained from one plant in a hill than where more are used.

With these crops, as well as other varieties of early vegetables, thorough and frequent cultivation is necessary to secure best results. A soil that is kept fairly well pulverized, and stirred at least once a week, is always better and produces better growth than soil not so frequently stirred.

If a person has no greenhouse or glass cold-frame in which to start the plants, in ordinary seasons a fair crop may be obtained by planting in the field, if the grower has fairly warm soil, warmly situated. By this is meant land sloping to the south and sheltered from northerly



From left to right, tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers, under irrigation, Summerland, B.C.

winds. The difficulty with growing these crops in this way is that, while a very good crop may be produced with proper care, there is danger that it will not be ready for the market in time to secure satisfactory prices.

In harvesting cucumbers it is always important to have the fruits fairly well developed before cutting. We say "cutting," as it is always best to use a knife and cut the stem, as the fruit holds up better than if the stem is broken from the fruit.

Considerable experience is necessary to determine the best maturity at which to cut cucumbers. A little practice and testing will, however, help. If removed from the vine at too early a stage they wilt and wither very quickly, and if allowed to remain too long on the vine the seeds become too large and are unsatisfactory in quality. Therefore, to secure a good uniform price, it is important to learn the best stage at which to cut.

It is best always to cut cucumbers first thing in the morning, as it is important that they are removed before the heat of the sun can affect the vines much. They should at once be removed to a cool location and kept there until packed and delivered to shipping-point. Exposure for even an hour or so to the sun will deteriorate them very rapidly, and cause them to arrive to the dealer in poor condition.

The cucumbers are packed in boxes, using 12 x 12-inch paper, wrapping each in this, as it has been found they keep better in this way. They usually sell by the box, but some quote them by the dozen. It is best, however, to count the cukes and mark the number contained on the corner of each box. As the season advances and price gets low the wrapping in paper is discontinued.

In locations favourable for growing this crop the fruits should begin cutting by second week in July. After this date, however, the price declines rapidly.

The market for cucumbers is being pretty well supplied; except for the first portion of the crop, and in order to make the growing of cucumbers at all profitable, it is necessary to have the soil well enriched and to have strong early plants in order to get the crop on the market at the earliest possible date.

The writer has succeeded in making the growing of cucumbers profitable each year by making the soil very rich, giving great care to the growing of the plants, and getting them started in the field as soon as weather will permit.

As for varieties, it is best to use one of the improved types of the White Spine sorts; of these, the one sold by the Stokes Seed Co., of Philadelphia, called Stokes Hothouse Perfection, produces a good medium-sized fruits of good form. By marking some of the best ones and saving these for seed for the past three years at the same type has been established fairly well which is an improvement in form, and also in holding its green colour much longer than the original type.

CANTALOUPE.

The date and method of starting the seeds and of handling the plants for this crop is the same as that recommended for cucumbers. The plants are set the same distance apart in the field, and in doing this it is equally important in each case that the roots of the plants be disturbed as little as possible. If grown in flats which are 12 x 22 x 4 inches deep inside measure, and not over eight plants to a flat, they can be removed to the field with but little interference with the root system. When hardening off the plants before they are to go to the field it is best to keep them rather dry until shortly before they are to be taken out, then to give a thorough wetting and cut the soil

with a large knife between the plants, when they can be lifted out with a large dibber.

Harvesting.

In the harvesting of cantaloupes it is even of greater importance to pick them at the right time. It requires considerable experience to determine just when that is, as it shows much more plainly in some fruits than in others. A skilful picker can easily form some idea by the appearance of the melon, as they change appearance as ripening proceeds; but even the best expert cannot tell all melons by appearance alone. There is, however, one test which seldom ever fails; that is, the stem loosening from the fruit. Melons should usually be gathered just as quickly as the stem can be removed from the fruit by pressing it moderately with the thumb. It is important to test every fruit that has the appearance of being ready, every day, as if left one day after it is ready it is apt to be too ripe before it reaches the consumer. The question of picking cantaloupes at the proper season, careful handling, the growing of the right varieties, are the chief factors on which depend the success of the industry in this Province.

Varieties.

Of the scores of varieties that have been tested, the one called "Hoodoo" has given much the best results of any, proving very satisfactory to growers, dealers, and consumers. But if a variety were obtainable having the other good qualities of this one and being a trifle larger and earlier, it would be very valuable indeed. With this end in view the Hoodoo was crossed in the season of 1916 with a very early and large variety, and, judging from the result of the first cross, it is hoped that a better type may be obtained; but it will take several seasons to get it established.

In 1917 eight new sorts were tested, but none of these came near enough in comparison to Hoodoo to be worthy of mention.

The same crate that is largely used south of the Boundary-line gave very good satisfaction. It is $11\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{3}{4} \times 20$ inches inside measure. This suits the market requirements in the Prairie Provinces, where our best markets obtain.

Victoria, B.C., issued April, 1918.

This circular has been prepared by J. L. Hilborn, Kill Kare Fruit Farm, West Summerland, B.C., at the request of the Horticultural Branch. Copies of this circular may be obtained free of charge on application to the Horticultural Branch, Department of Agriculture, Victoria, B.C., or from local branch offices of the Department.

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